

## Neal Smith *National Wildlife Refuge*



### Special Events



#### Monarch Madness

Saturday, September 6

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

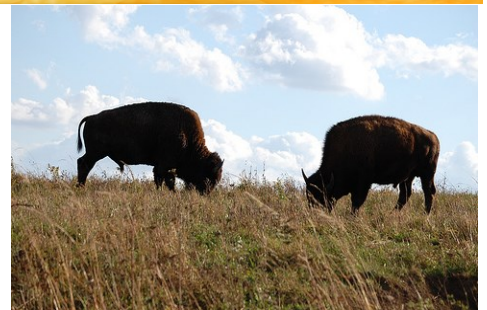
Calling citizen scientists of all ages! Neal Smith NWR is looking for volunteers to assist refuge staff in capturing, tagging, and releasing monarch butterflies! Tagging monarchs will help scientists learn more about the fascinating monarch migration. **Pre-registration is required** and limited to the first 100 participants.

#### Bison Day

Saturday, September 27

10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Would you like to celebrate bison and the prairie ecosystem that sustains them? Come enjoy bison talks, book readings and signings by author, John Price! Music, weaver's guild demonstrations, rope making demonstrations, games and crafts will be available for folks of all ages! Bison chip throwing contest toward the end of the day! Lunch is also available for purchase.



#### Ding Darling Day

Saturday, October 11

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

In honor of Iowan J.N. "Ding" Darling, a pioneer conservationist, the refuge is hosting stewardship opportunities for you and/or your group. From collecting seeds to removing invasive plants, everyone will have a chance to help restore prairie habitat at Neal Smith NWR. FREE lunch provided by the Friends of Neal Smith NWR. **Pre-registration is required.**



For more information: (515) 994-3400 [http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Neal\\_Smith/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Neal_Smith/)

# Program & Activity Guide

## Naturalist Programs

### Nature Tots

Children ages 3-5 are invited to bring their favorite adult and join us as we read stories, go outside, make nature crafts, and much more! **Registration is encouraged.**

Date	Time	Age	Topic
September 13	10:30 am - 11:30 am	3 - 5 yrs.	Magnificent Monarchs
October 4	10:30 am - 11:30 am	3 - 5 yrs.	Lovely Leaves
November 1	10:30 am - 11:30 am	3 - 5 yrs.	Winter Sleepers

### 2 Simple Ways to Register!

#### 1. Phone:

Call 515-994-3400

#### 2. Email:

[Megan\\_Wandag@fws.gov](mailto:Megan_Wandag@fws.gov)

## Sunday Ranger Hike

A ranger leads visitors of all ages on a nature hike to discover the many wonders of Neal Smith's amazing prairie habitat. **Pre-registration encouraged.**  
Contact Brianna Patrick at [brianna\\_patrick@fws.gov](mailto:brianna_patrick@fws.gov)

Date	Time	Age	Topic
September 21	2:00 pm—3:00 pm	All	Birds
October 19	2:00 pm—3:00 pm	All	The Power of Seeds
November 16	2:00 pm—3:00 pm	All	Photo Hunt



### Fall Photo Hike

**Saturday, Sept. 20**  
**8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.**

Photographers of all ages and skill levels are invited to join a Ranger, who will introduce subjects on the fall prairie and lead a walk to several new photo locations. Bring your own camera. **Please pre-register.**

## Volunteer Opportunities

### Second Saturday Stewardship

Interested in giving back to the environment? Stewardship volunteer programs occur on the 2nd Saturday of each month at the Refuge. All ages welcome!

To register, contact **Megan Wandag** at [Megan\\_Wandag@fws.gov](mailto:Megan_Wandag@fws.gov) or 515-994-3400.

Date	Time
September 13	9:00 am—12:00 pm
October 11	9:00 am—12:00 pm
November 8	9:00 am—12:00 pm

**DON'T FORGET!**

Bring a reusable water bottle!



For more information: (515) 994-3400 [http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Neal\\_Smith/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Neal_Smith/)

## Self-Guided

### Return to Wildness Movie

15 minutes

Film presentation about Neal Smith NWR is shown every hour on the half hour, or upon request. No group is too small!

The Visitor Center is open every day with the exception of some federal holidays. Closed all federal holidays except Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day. Visitor Center hours are 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Monday - Saturday, and 12 p.m. - 5p.m. on Sundays. Trails and Auto Tour are open daily from dawn to dusk.

### COME VISIT!

### Outdoor Scavenger Hunts

How many birds do you see?  
Can you identify prairie insects? Borrow a copy of seasonal ID sheets at the front desk of the Visitor Center to use while you hike.

### Hiking Trails

Take a hike through the beautiful tallgrass prairie or oak savanna. Try to catch a glimpse of birds, bison, or diverse insects. Brochures and maps available at the Visitor Center.



Trail	Length	Surface	Habitat
Overlook Trail	1/2 mile	Paved— Accessible	Tallgrass Prairie
Tallgrass Trail	2 miles	Paved	Tallgrass Prairie
Oak Savanna Trail	1/2 mile	Gravel	Oak Savanna
Basswood Trail	1/2 mile	Grass	Woodland

### Prairie Learning Center Exhibits

Come explore the interactive exhibits at the Visitor Center! Exhibits include an underground maze, videos, drawing table, explorer sheets, puppet theatre, and exploratory bison room.

*\*Exhibits may be closed due to construction, please check website for up to date information\**



### LET'S CRUISE

Enjoy the Refuge from the comfort of your vehicle on the 4 mile Auto Tour. This is the best way to see bison or elk. Check out a narrated interpretive CD of the route for FREE at the Visitor Center.



### Photo Hike Exhibit Opening

Saturday, October 4, 2:00 - 4:00 pm

Images from photo hike participants will be displayed in the Refuge art gallery throughout October.

**All programs are FREE & open to the public!**



## Fall Exploration Ideas

### 1. Go on a Seed Hunt!

Prairie seeds come in all different shapes and sizes. Can you find any that are fuzzy, sticky, sharp, soft, tiny or huge?

### 2. Search For Color!

At first glimpse, the prairie may appear to be a blanket of gold. But if you take a closer look, hues of blue, purple, green, and brown will be revealed.

### 3. Take a Binocular Hike!

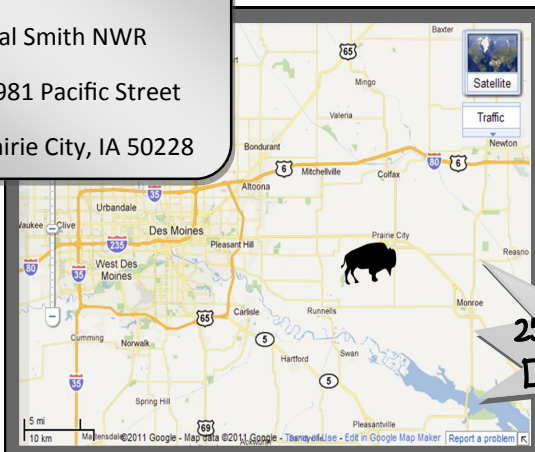
During the fall season, a variety of birds visit the refuge. Look for short eared owls and northern harriers flying overhead and sparrows and longspurs hidden in the grasses. Binoculars are available for loan.

### 4. Catch a Sunrise or Sunset!

With days getting shorter, it is easier to visit the refuge right at dawn or dusk. These are the most beautiful and busy times of day on the prairie. Cotton candy skies are the backdrop for a busy show of animal activity.

#### Street Address

Neal Smith NWR  
9981 Pacific Street  
Prairie City, IA 50228



25 miles from  
Des Moines!



### LET'S EXPLORE

Come explore the natural wonders Neal Smith NWR has to offer! Check out binoculars or an "Explorers Backpack" for free at the Visitor Center during normal business hours.

### Did you know....

Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), one of the most common prairie grasses, is also called "turkey foot"? Its three racemes, or flowering parts, resemble the foot of a turkey!

### DIRECTIONS TO THE REFUGE

Coming from the EAST on Interstate 80, take the Colfax exit and go south on Iowa HWY 117, about 7 miles to Prairie City. The paved entry road is located at the southwest corner of Prairie City at the Highway 163–Prairie City Interchange.

Coming from the WEST at the junction of Interstate 35 and 80, go east on Interstate 80 about 3 miles to the HWY 65 exit. Take HWY 65 south to Iowa HWY 163. At HWY 163, turn east and go about 15 miles to Prairie City (exit 18). The paved entry road is located at the southwest corner of Prairie City at the Highway 163–Prairie City Interchange.

